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DIST 11 OCTOBER 1968

COUNTRY: CZECHOSLOVAKIA/USSR

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(C)

DOI: 18 SEPTEMBER - 4 OCTOBER 1968

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON GROWTH OF DISUNITY WITHIN CZECH LEADERSHIP AND  
OTHER ASPECTS OF CURRENT STATUS OF SOVIET OCCUPATION OF  
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)-25Yrs  
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PADA:

SOURCE:

SUMMARY:

THE CAUTIOUS

OPTIMISM WHICH PREVAILED AFTER DUBCEK'S FIRST RETURN FROM MOSCOW HAS

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APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: OCT 2000

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NOW CHANGED TO A HARD REALISTIC RESIGNATION AND PESSIMISM. SOVIET PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE HAS BEEN PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL AS THE UNITY OF THE CZECH LEADERSHIP HAS NOW WEAKENED. THIS DRIFT TOWARDS DISUNITY IS ACCOMPANIED BY GROWING DISSATISFACTION AND LACK OF SYMPATHY BY THE CZECH PEOPLE FOR SOME OF THE CZECH LEADERS AND POLICIES.

THIS TREND [REDACTED] MIGHT PAVE THE WAY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PRO-SOVIET GOVERNMENT. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] DUBCEK AND SMRKOVSKY HAVE CONSIDERED STEPPING DOWN FROM THEIR POSITIONS. THE CZECHS HAVE NOT GIVEN THE SOVIETS ANY SUPPORT IN THEIR EFFORTS TO SUPPLY THE OCCUPATION TROOPS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SANITATION SUPPLIES TO PREVENT POSSIBLE EPIDEMICS IN THE OLD CZECH GARRISONS THE SOVIET TROOPS ARE NOW MOVING INTO. SOME SICKNESS IS ALREADY BEGINNING TO SPREAD IN THE AREAS WHERE THE TROOPS ARE QUARTERED. END SUMMARY.

1. [REDACTED]

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CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM WHICH PREVAILED AFTER DUBCEK'S FIRST RETURN FROM MOSCOW, ALTHOUGH NOT YET TURNED INTO DEPRESSION, HAS CHANGED TO A HARD, (HEADQUARTERS COMMENT: THIS INTENTION HAS BEEN RUMORED BUT OFFICIALLY DENIED)

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REALISTIC RESIGNATION THAT THE CONDITIONS WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE IMPOSED ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA ARE HARDER THAN EVER IMAGINED. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE SOVIET TACTICS OF APPLYING PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES ON THE CZECH LEADERSHIP BY CONTINUALLY POSTPONING AND OBSCURING ANY COMMON UNDERSTANDING ON "NORMALIZATION" IN ORDER TO SOW DISUNITY WITHIN THE CZECH LEADERSHIP HAS ALREADY BEEN PARTLY SUCCESSFUL. FROM PRIOR TO THE BRATISLAVA, CIERNA TALKS UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF SEPTEMBER THERE WAS COMPLETE UNITY AMONG THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN LEADERSHIP. THIS UNITY HAS NOW WEAKENED AND THE LEADERSHIP HAS DISSIMILAR OPINIONS AND VIEWS ON MANY VARIOUS QUESTIONS. THE EARLIER UNANIMITY IN THE PRESIDUM AND GOVERNMENT MEETINGS HAS BEEN REPLACED BY MEETINGS WHICH ARE DEVISIVE AND ALMOST DISORDERLY WITH ARGUMENTS AMONG LEADERS ON ALL POSSIBLE MATTERS. THIS DISAGREEMENT IS ACCOMPANIED BY ALL POSSIBLE TYPES OF RUMORS SPREAD AND CIRCULATED AMONG THE UPPER ECHELONS OF THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP. [REDACTED] THIS DRIFT TOWARDS DISUNITY IS ACCOMPANIED BY A GROWING DISSATISFACTION AND LACK OF SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING BY THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN PEOPLE FOR SOME OF THE CZECH LEADERS AND POLICIES. [REDACTED] THIS TREND [REDACTED] [REDACTED] MAY PAVE THE WAY FOR THE ELEVATION BY THE SOVIET UNION OF "COLLABORATORS" TO THE TOP POSITIONS IN THE PARTY AND

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THE GOVERNMENT, AND TO THE ULTIMATE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW "SOVIET-FRIENDLY" GOVERNMENT. [REDACTED] HOWEVER, [REDACTED] THERE IS ALSO A CONCERTED EFFORT BY THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN LEADERSHIP TO PRESERVE CALM AND TO PLACE IN KEY POSITIONS MEN WITH GOOD NERVES WHO HAVE STATUS AND PRESTIGE AMONG THE PEOPLE AND WHO ARE FRIENDLY TO THE PROGRESSIVE AND LIBERAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP.

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2. [REDACTED] THE LAST MOSCOW AGREEMENT WAS HARDER AND MUCH LESS FAVORABLE THAN HAD BEEN HOPED.

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3. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] DUBCEK AND SMRKOVSKY HAVE CONSIDERED STEPPING DOWN FROM THEIR POSITIONS. FIRST, THEY HAVE CONTEMPLATED THAT NOW THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY TO EXECUTE THE PROGRAM WHICH THEY HAVE CHAMPIONED AND WHICH THEY BELIEVE IS MORALLY RIGHT AND FULLY SUPPORTED BY THE PEOPLE, IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO LEAVE AS A PROTEST AGAINST SUPPRESSION OF THE PROGRAM. SECOND, THERE IS ALSO THE SUSPICION THAT SOVIET TACTICS MAY AIM AT CREATING A SITUATION IN WHICH THE CZECH PEOPLE THEMSELVES BECOME SO TIRED OF THE COMPROMISING DUBCEK AND SMRKOVSKY THAT PUBLIC PRESSURES OR EVEN THE CZECH PARLIAMENT WILL ULTIMATELY ASK DUBCEK AND SMRKOVSKY TO STEP DOWN. IN SHORT, DUBCEK AND SMRKOVSKY HAVE CONSIDERED (AND PERHAPS STILL DO) THAT IT MIGHT BE PREFERABLE

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TO LEAVE AT THIS EARLY DATE THAN TO POSTPONE THE DECISION UNTIL THEY ARE FORCED TO LEAVE AS THE RESULT OF SOVIET TACTICS.

4. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] MUCH OF THE PICTURE  
SPREAD BY THE WEST REGARDING INTERNAL CONDITIONS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA  
IS FALSE. [REDACTED] ALTHOUGH CZECH FOREIGN POLICY IS NOW STRING-  
ENTLY CONTROLLED BY THE SOVIET UNION, THE INTERNAL ECONOMIC REFORMS  
INITIATED BY DUBCEK CONTINUE, ALTHOUGH MARKEDLY REDUCED. ALSO CONTINU-  
ING BUT AT A REDUCED PACE, ARE MANY OTHER CARDINAL INTERNAL POLICIES  
OF THE DUBCEK REGIME. ALTHOUGH THERE IS A CERTAIN DEGREE OF MONITOR-  
ING OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CZECH NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEADERS BY THE  
SOVIET UNION AND THEIR INCOMING EXPERTS, IT IS ONLY NOTICEABLE IN  
NON-CONCRETE WAYS; LOCAL INTERFERENCE BY THE SOVIET FORCES HAS NOT  
APPROACHED THE EXAGGERATED EXTENT ALLEGED BY THE WESTERN PRESS.  
TOURISM, ALSO, FUNCTIONS ALMOST NORMALLY. [REDACTED] HOWEVER,  
[REDACTED] PRESS FREEDOM WHICH WAS A REALITY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA DURING THE  
SPRING AND SUMMER, IS NOW COMPLETELY GONE AND A STRINGENT CENSORSHIP  
HAS REPLACED IT.

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5. [REDACTED] ALTHOUGH THERE IS A GROWING BITTERNESS AMONG THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS POLICIES, THERE HAVE BEEN LITTLE OR NO PROVOCATIONS AGAINST THE SOVIET OCCUPATION FORCES. HOWEVER, [REDACTED] THE CZECHS HAVE NOT GIVEN THE SOVIETS ANY AID OR SUPPORT IN THEIR EFFORTS TO SUPPLY THE OCCUPATION TROOPS. THEY HAVE NOT EVEN SOLD BREAD TO THE OCCUPYING FORCES AND EVEN THEIR WATER HAS TO BE TRANSPORTED FROM EAST GERMANY AND POLAND OR MUST BE OBTAINED FROM NATURAL SOURCES. THE TROOPS, THE NUMBER OF WHICH IS BEING SHARPLY REDUCED, ARE NOW MOVING INTO OLD CZECH GARRISONS AND CAMPS. THERE IS A GREAT DANGER THAT SEVERE EPIDEMICS MAY STRIKE THE SOVIET OCCUPYING FORCES AS THE SANITARY CONDITIONS OF THESE OLD CAMPS ARE EXTREMELY LOW. SOME SICKNESS IS ALREADY BEGINNING TO SPREAD IN THE AREAS IN WHICH THE TROOPS ARE QUARTERED BECAUSE OF THE POOR LIVING CONDITIONS. THE ONLY SUPPLIES WHICH THE CZECHS HAVE GIVEN TO THE SOVIET OCCUPYING FORCES HAS BEEN CHLORINE AND OTHER SANITATION SUPPLIES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF DISEASE AND EPIDEMICS. THE CZECHS HAVE FELT THAT BECAUSE THERE IS NO AGREEMENT REGARDING AID TO THE OCCUPATION FORCES, THE SOVIETS WILL HAVE TO SUPPLY AND SUPPORT THEIR FORCES AS BEST THEY CAN. EVIDENTLY THE SOVIETS HAVE TAKEN THIS CZECH POSITION VERY HARD.

6. [REDACTED]

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7. [REDACTED] DISSEM. STATE.

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